

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-07 CIAE-00

SP-02 PM-03 DODE-00 L-01 /041 W

----- 039270

R 141800Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9563

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 2254

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH DEFENSE MINISTER FORLANI ON
DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: ROME 1661

1. AT FEBRUARY 13 LUNCH WITH MY OLD FRIEND THE FORMER CHRIS-
TIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY SECRETARY AND CURRENT DEFENSE MINISTER
FORLANI, HE MADE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE
DOMESTIC ITALIAN POLITICAL SCENE.

2. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT-COMMUNIST PARTY "HISTORIC COMPROMISE"
ISSUE. FORLANI SAID THAT THE RECENT DC NATIONAL COUNCIL
MEETING HAD STRENGTHENED THE HAND OF PARTY SECRETARY FANFANI
AND HAD PROVIDED A CLEAR MANDATE AGAINST THE "HISTORIC COMPROMISE"
(DC-PCI ACCORD) AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL. AT THE LOCAL
LEVEL, HE NOTED, THE DC CITY ALDERMEN HAVE NOW WITHDRAWN FROM
THE VENICE CITY GOVERNMENT (WHERE A DC-SOCIALIST-PCI ACCORD
IN LATE DECEMBER HAD PROVOKED NATIONAL PUBLICITY). FORLANI
SAID THAT BY MEANS OF THE ACCORD, THE VENICE DC REPRESENTATIVES
HAD ACCOMPLISHED THEIR AIM OF WINNING APPROVAL OF A CITY PLAN
ENTITLING THE CITY TO ACCESS TO A GOVERNMENT FUND OF 100
BILLION LIRE (155 MILLION DOLLARS). HAD THE PLAN NOT BEEN
APPROVED BY THE END OF LAST YEAR THE MONEY WOULD HAVE BEEN LOST.
HE SAID BOTH THE VENICE ACCORD, NOW ON THE ROCKS, AND A SIMI-
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LAR DC-PCI RAPPROCHMONT IN AVELLINO WERE THE RESULT OF UNUSUAL

LOCAL FACTORS. HE DOES NOT EXPECT ADDITIONAL LOCAL PCI-DC ACCORDS EXCEPT IN THE CASE OF UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS PREVAILED IN VENICE AND AVELLINO.

3. JUNE REGIONAL ELECTIONS. FORLANI EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS EXPECTED IN JUNE. HE FELT THAT THE AMOUNT OF TIME LEFT BEFORE THE ELECTIONS IS INADEQUATE FOR ELECTORAL ISSUES THE DC IS PUSHING, SUCH AS LAW AND ORDER, TO PRODUCE REALLY TANGIBLE RESULTS. HE WAS ALSO CAUTIOUS ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF WINNING GREATER SUPPORT FOR THE DC FROM AMONG THE YOUNGER GENERATION. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS PROBLEM TO A LESSENING OF INTEREST BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN POLITICAL ACTION AND TO THE IMPACT OF THE MASS MEDIA AND AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WHERE MANY EDUCATORS WERE INCLINED TO A LEFT-WING PHILOSOPHY. HOWEVER, FORLANI SAID, HE DID NOT AGREE WITH SOME OF THE DC WHO THINK THE PARTY WILL LOSE 5 OR 6 PERCENT IN THE COMING ELECTIONS. HE HOPES THAT LOSSES CAN BE KEPT TO A RATHER SMALL MARGIN IF THE PARTY CAN PULL TOGETHER IN UNITED FASHION IN THE CAMPAIGN.

4. RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIALISTS. FORLANI BELIEVES THE PRIME OBJECTIVE OF THE PSI IS TO INCREASE THE SOCIALIST VOTE IN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS. HE THEREFORE DOUBTS THAT THE PSI WOULD WANT TO PRECIPITATE A GOVERNMENT CRISIS UNTIL AFTER THE REGIONALS, IF THEN. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY MEETINGS, PARTY SCHISMS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ROME02254
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750055-0416
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750241/aaaabkrp.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: ROME 1661
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <14 OCT 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH DEFENSE MINISTER FORLANI ON DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION
TAGS: PINT, IT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006